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Lao People's Democratic Republic



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

QUARTERLY PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

QUARTER 2 - 2013

DATE: 30 August 2013

Award ID: 00063618

Project ID: 00080607

Project Title: Support to UXO Lao

2013 Annual Budget (UNDP): USD 4,970,164

Implementing Partner: UXO Lao

Period Covered: 01 April 2013 – 30 June 2013

1. Overall Analysis of Project Performance

At the end of Quarter 2, UXO Lao is on track in achieving its quarterly clearance and community awareness targets for 2013. In Q2, UXO Lao released 851 hectares of land through area clearance and technical survey activities reaching 93,481 beneficiaries in nine provinces. Within the reporting period, UXO Lao destroyed 14,594 items of UXO of which 7,624 were sub-munitions or bombies, through clearance, technical survey and roving tasks. The removal or destruction of UXO increases the safety of people living in UXO impacted communities and increases the amount of safe land available for food production and other socio-economic development activities. The work undertaken is fully in accordance with national standards and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). In Q2, 89% of the cleared land was agricultural land.

UXO Lao further conducted risk education activities in the nine provinces designed to increase the awareness of people living in UXO affected areas about the dangers of unexploded ordnance and to change the behaviour of 'high risk' target groups. During the reporting period, 164 risk education activities were conducted by UXO Lao staff and village volunteers and reached 46,837 people (including 24,120 women of whom 11,310 were children, 22,717 men of whom 11,041 were children). This is on track with the targets set for Q2 of 2013. Risk education activities are closely linked with survey activities by allowing villagers to assist survey teams in identifying the location of UXO. Furthermore, 500 roving tasks were conducted in 390 villages removing 4,990 items of UXO including 2,705 sub-munitions or bombies, with a response time of not more than two weeks from request to task completion.

UXO Lao's activities contribute not only to saving the lives of the people living in areas of UXO contamination, but also to increasing socio-economic opportunities in some of the poorest districts. Besides areas cleared for agricultural land, UXO Lao also contributes to the Lao Government's development projects, as well as those of other international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGO) to allow infrastructure development to happen including the establishment of irrigation projects, schools, hospitals, health centers, clean water projects, roads, and other development activities. UXO Lao works in alignment with the Government's strategy on rural development and poverty eradication in accordance with the Social-Economic Development Plan of Lao PDR.

As part of UNDP's continued effort to support the institutional capacity building of UXO Lao, the Terms of Reference for a planned capacity assessment study are planned to be finalized in Q3. The objective of this activity is to conduct a systematic capacity assessment of UXO Lao to determine where UXO Lao's institutional capacity stands at this point and to be able to determine which capacities require further development and support. The capacity assessment TOR is planned to be finalized in September and the assessment is planned to take place in Q4 of 2013.

A number of UXO Lao staff has further participated in various trainings and workshops. These trainings aim to improve the technical and organizational skills of UXO Lao staff in their respective capacities with the overall aim to increase the institutional capacity of UXO Lao to better manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk. A detailed description of the organized trainings and their impact is provided in section 3 "Project Performance".

2. Project Risks and Issues

<i>Status of Risks and Risk Management Strategies and other challenges</i>	<i>Counter Measurements</i>	<i>Update</i>
Lack of financial sustainability/ high dependency of NRA/UXO Lao on donors' contributions (prodoc risk)	Increased GoL contribution to the UXO sector, as well as continued donor funding to support expanded activities over time. Prefer multi-year contributions.	The annual work plan for 2013 shows an unfunded amount of USD 1.8 million. Through UNDP and UXO Lao's resource mobilization efforts, UNDP received an additional funding from the Government of Australia in June 2013. UNDP is also currently working with SDC on a new funding proposal to support UXO Lao. This additional funding will enable UXO Lao to achieve the activities it set out to do in 2013. There has been no update on increased GoL contribution to the UXO sector at this point.
Technical complexity of sector inhibits NRA and UXO Lao effectiveness (prodoc risk)	Capacity self-assessments and capacity building measures to be undertaken by UXO Lao with UNDP support, then capacity development plans undertaken Stay up to date with technical and non-technical developments in the sector	UNDP is currently in the process of drafting a Terms of Reference for the capacity-assessment of UXO Lao which is planned to be completed in Q3 of 2013. The assessment is expected to start in Q4 of 2013. In March 2013, Trials were undertaken in Champasack province to continue the development of a more efficient technical survey capacity. More information is reported on in the Project Performance section under Activity 4.

<p>Outdated Equipment and Vehicles. In some provinces have reported problems with outdated equipment and/or vehicles during their operations. A review of the situation is currently taken place to update the list of vehicles with the corresponding issues.</p>	<p>New Equipment and vehicles to be procured</p>	<p>The Government of Lao PDR has signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Japan in May 2012, where the Government of Japan agreed to provide support to UXO Lao operations in the form of new equipment and a new fleet of vehicles in the amount of ¥900,000,000. All new equipment and vehicles are expected to be received at UXO Lao by the end of September 2013.</p> <p>UXO Lao plans to take a full assessment of assets and establish an asset management database in order to be able to fully monitor and manage its assets. This will be part of the 2014 Annual Work Plan.</p>
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Challenges and risks will be updated and reviewed on a regular basis by the project.

3. Project Performance

OUTPUT 1: UXO Lao is better able to manage clearance and risk education programmes for the needs of communities at risk

Activity 1: Release priority land in accordance with Lao National Standards and the *Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)* in nine or more provinces for safe access to contaminated land for socio-economic and humanitarian purposes and reduce the risk of UXO related accidents through risk education programs

Clearance overview: 851 hectares of land were cleared through area clearance and technical survey reaching 93,481 beneficiaries across nine provinces in Lao PDR. 14,594 items of UXO were destroyed through clearance, technical survey and roving tasks of which 7,624 were sub-munitions or bombies. The methodology used for prioritizing land for clearance is in accordance with the national Safe Path Forward II strategy endorsed by the Government of Lao PDR in July 2012.

763 hectares (89%) of the total land cleared is agricultural land. The project reports no significant interruptions of clearance activities due to weather conditions in Q2. It was however noted that in some provinces the project encountered problems with their fleet of vehicles. UXO Lao has signed an agreement with the Government of Japan who will provide a new fleet of vehicles in the amount of ¥900,000,000 that is scheduled to arrive in September 2013 and should help addressing the challenge of an outdated fleet of vehicles.

Out of 851 hectares of land cleared by UXO Lao, 354 hectares of land were cleared in direct support to development agencies' projects in Lao PDR. UXO Lao has cleared land at no cost to development projects and thus also contributes to further socioeconomic development in the country. UXO Lao does not clear land for commercial investors or for investment purposes.

Technical Survey:

Technical survey is successful in identifying UXO locations and the release of land through technical survey increases the amount of land safe for farming and other socio-economic development purposes. It maximizes UXO Lao's resources as technical survey determines whether a particular area should be subjected to area clearance methods or not. Until 2012, technical survey was considered as a separate activity and was recorded as such. From the beginning of 2013, as decided in the Regional Work Planning Meeting held in November 2012, UXO Lao now considers technical survey to be an integral part of the clearance process, which means that technical survey is no longer recorded as a discrete activity.

During the reporting period, 109 hectares of land were released by technical survey teams across eight provinces, reached to 6,972 beneficiaries.

Roving Tasks:

500 roving tasks were conducted in 390 villages and 4,990 items of UXO were removed and destroyed. The project reports that 60% of the overall roving task target set in 2013 work plan were achieved thus far. The aim of roving teams is to remove or destroy surface UXO items reported by villagers or by UXO Lao survey team

members. Through the removal or destruction of UXO, land is made safe for people to walk on and use for productive purposes, as well as improving and providing equitable access to land, markets, and socio-economic services

General Survey Task:

569 survey tasks were conducted in 447 villages, mapping out 2,845 items of UXO. Survey teams collect data which is then shared with the NRA and entered into the national UXO database. Data collected includes location of UXO found, areas requested to be cleared, as well as cleared or released land. Data is also used to generate detailed maps for use by UXO clearance teams and for use by government and other development authorities. UXO data is available for policy and development planning. Additional data fields are identified and collected as well such as information on the accessibilities of roads, whether the roads are safe to drive on, and whether the communication network is ok, etc.

Community Awareness:

Content of Community Awareness activities are decided at the national level and agreed upon by all operators conducting such activities. Activities to convey the messages include puppet shows, songs, dances, and games that are adapted for specific age groups. During such activities, villagers are also encouraged to identify the location of UXO they may have found in the surrounding areas. The CA teams conducted 164 CA activities reaching 46,837 people (including 24,120 women of whom 11,310 were children and 22,717 men of whom 11,041 were children).

The project continues to attract active community volunteers for community awareness activities. UXO currently engages 372 CA village volunteers including 82 males and 290 females who raise awareness on the risk of UXO within their communities.

UXO Lao accident in Xiengkhuang province

On April 7th, an accident occurred in Xieng Khuang province on a site where UXO Lao were working. The day of the accident was not a working day, but a number of items of UXO had been left on site under protective sandbags awaiting destruction the following week. Several local boys went onto the site, removed a number of UXO from under the sandbags, and began playing with them. An explosion of a bombie killed one boy and injured two more.

An investigation was subsequently undertaken by both UXO Lao and NRA. The report identified a number of areas where UXO Lao were lacking and made a number of recommendations were made. These included bolstering the equipment for teams in the field, ensuring daily demolitions were undertaken and ensuring all acting team leaders are qualified to undertake the work required of them. Over the course of the months following the accident, UXO Lao has acted on these recommendations and operations are even more secure than they were previously.

Activity 2: Assess, strengthen and improve UXO Lao programme management capacity through provision of training and advisory services and mobilize sufficient resources for UXO Lao to enable Lao PDR to move towards meeting MDG9 targets and CCM obligations *(This activity also includes the project management cost of the various UXO units at the National Office as outlined below)*

This section aims to report on notable progress, events and trainings of UXO Lao staff in their staff capacities or of the organization as a whole. It does not aim at listing each and every activity of UXO Lao's work, but rather highlights events and improvements that are notable and that the projects believes will have an impact on its institutional capacity building.

Capacity Assessment UXO Lao update

UNDP and UXO Lao are currently finalizing the Terms of Reference for the planned capacity assessment of UXO Lao and NRA in 2013 which is planned to be conducted by a consultant in Q4 2013. Based on the identified needs of the capacity assessment, further training will be provided for key UXO Lao staff in order to further improve the institutional capacity of UXO Lao.

Financial Management update

UXO Lao has been working with the new financial software "AccPac" at the National Office since early 2012. While the overall financial management capacity at the UXO Lao National Office has improved with the use of this new software, the provincial offices were still entering their financial information on Excel sheets which were then sent to the National Office and entered manually into AccPac by the UXO Lao Finance Unit. The additional time required to manually enter the information sent by the provincial offices to the National Office was costly and created difficulties in the timely closing of accounts.

In June 2013, UXO Lao procured the accounting software "PAS", which allows UXO Lao's provincial offices and the Training Center to enter their financial information into the PAS software, which is linked to the National Office software AccPac. With the new software, the National Office is now able to easily review and approve financial information entered by the provincial offices and the Training Center, as the financial information can now be automatically uploaded into AccPac. A three day training was organized for all UXO Lao finance staff from 19 -21 June 2013, where the staff received hands-on training on the use of the new PAS software. The following UXO Lao finance staff participated at the training:

- 9 Finance staff from the provinces
- 5 Finance Staff from the UXO Lao National office
- 1 Finance staff from the UXO Lao Training Center

15 Finance Staff TOTAL

The three day training allowed the UXO Lao to receive a very good introduction to the new finance software for two days and one full day was spent by the UXO Lao finance staff practicing entering data into the new software. While a consultant of the financial software company provided a detailed training on the use of the new software, the UXO Lao Finance Unit at the National Office provided an overview of the UXO Lao specific set-up of this software, in terms of donor information, activity, account codes etc. This training was also a good opportunity for knowledge exchange for the UXO Lao finance staff and the participants were very actively engaged in the course.

While the UXO Lao National Office staff is very versatile in the use of the financial management software, (as they have already been working with the overall financial software *AccPac* for over a year now) the use of financial management software is quite new to the finance staff of the provinces as well as the Training Center. In order to take advantage of the recent learning progress made, the UXO Lao Chief of Finance has already asked all finance staff in the provinces and the Training Center to start recording the monthly expenditures in the new system. The next six months are planned to be a period of testing and practicing the use of the new system, where the finance staff will enter the financial information in the new software and the UXO Lao Finance unit at the National Office will carefully monitor and provide feedback to the finance staff.

The Finance Unit in the National Office is currently reviewing the test entries of the provincial finance staff and is providing further individual feedback and training via phone and email. The Chief of Finance will assess the progress and determine when and if a follow up training will be required this year.

HR update

UXO Lao is currently looking into opportunities to procure a HR database software for UXO Lao which will be part of the 2014 Annual Work Plan. UXO Lao is currently tracking all HR related matters on Excel sheets and hard copy documents, but there is not yet a proper HR software in place.

Quality Management update

The purpose of Quality Management (QM) in UXO/Mine Action is to confirm that operational procedures for UXO/Mine Action are appropriate, are being applied and will achieve the stated requirements in a safe, effective and efficient manner.

The QM unit at UXO Lao monitors the compliance of UXO Lao staff and operations with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) through field and office inspections at national and provincial offices. In Q2, the QM unit can report the following achievements:

1. Office Inspection (Internal Audit)

The unit completed the Office Inspections (spot checks) of fixed assets in nine provinces in June 2013. The aim of the spot checks was to:

- Ensure that fixed assets are accounted for at all times,
- Ensure that fixed assets are used and maintained in an orderly manner and safeguarded against loss, theft, damage or deterioration; and
- Ensure that the disposal of fixed assets complies with donor requirements and with regulations of the Lao Government.

The overall outcome of this inspection was that some fixed assets did not meet the above mentioned criteria and did not comply with UXO Lao procedure of assets management. The QM team found that some equipment was recorded incorrectly in the assets list and was not up to date. For example at one office, 10 Vallon detectors were listed as serviceable on the asset list but when the detectors were checked, two items were unserviceable. The QM inspection teams made a report in this regard to the Provincial Coordinator and also submitted the report to the UXO Lao National Office as well. The QM Unit has asked the QM inspection teams in the provinces to follow up on this issue.

UXO Lao plans to establish an asset management system as part of the 2014 Annual work plan in order to further improve UXO Lao's capacity to properly manage and monitor its assets.

2. External Audit

- The QM unit coordinated and provided required documentation to the audit company KPMG in regards to the external UNDP NIM audit for the year 2012
- The unit followed up on the external audit conducted by S&PNG (Bilateral funds from the Government of Japan which supported to two provinces: Sekong & Salavane)

3. Testing and Assessment of a new Accident Response Plan

The QM unit completed the testing of a new Accident Response Plan (ARP) that focuses on white phosphorous accidents in April 2013. The testing took place 31 March – 4 April 2013 in Xiengkhuang province. Thus far, UXO Lao has only used a general UXO Accident Response Plan that did not take into account the different nature of UXO related white phosphorous accidents.

White phosphorous is a substance that is toxic and burns violently when exposed to the air and extra precautions are necessary when carrying out this type of detonation. The new white phosphorous ARP allows UXO Lao to be prepared to provide assistance in case of white phosphorous UXO accidents. The white phosphorous ARP has already been implemented in all nine UXO Lao provinces and the senior medics are monitoring the progress and following up on the progress of this new scenario every 2 months. The three QM mobile teams are also monitoring the proper implementation of this new scenario.

4. Workshops/Trainings

UXO Lao – CMAC workshop June 2013:

The QM Unit participated in the Lao-Cambodia South-South Cooperation within the UXO/Mine Action Sector workshop organized by UXO LAO and CMAC (Cambodia Mine Action Centre) supported by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) from 17-21 June 2013 in Xiengkhuang province. The aim of the workshop was to share knowledge and experiences on Standing Operations Procedures in the mine action sector between UXO Lao and CMAC.

The impressions of the QM team were that the workshop was conducted professionally and the topics were relevant to UXO Lao's work. Topics included: project cycle management, SOP, principles of quality assurance (QA), the difference between NMAS & SOP, purpose of concept development, Mine Action Standards and SOP, SOP development and revision, etc. The workshop participants further visited an all women clearance team at a UXO site in Pek District.

Gender Mainstreaming Workshop May 2013

UXO Lao participated at the NRA organized workshop "Mainstreaming Gender in a Mine Action Programme"

on 9th May 2013 at the Lao Plaza Hotel in Vientiane. The participants learned about:

- Gender equality
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender sensitive work environment
- Gender Based Violence
- The importance of gender mainstreaming in Mine Action: distinct roles & responsibilities: mobility patterns/exposure to risk, participation in decision making, access to services & resources

Another important topic of the workshop was “Gender mainstreaming in project management” which included:

- How to incorporate gender in project planning and set-up
- Design services to meet the needs of all
- Access for women, girls, boys and men
- Equal participation
- Gender sensitive training
- Addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in a Mine Action sector programme
- Collect, analyze and report sex-and-age-disaggregated data
- Target actions based on a gender analysis

5. Field Inspections

The QM unit, through their three mobile QM teams, also undertakes inspections of operations related processes, products and infrastructure on a regular basis. The three QM teams have completed 16 inspection rounds in Q2 in all nine provinces as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Quality assurance of Demolitions: | 35 Teams assessed |
| • Quality assurance of General Survey : | 20 Teams assessed |
| • External QC inspection of cleared land: | 60 Sites inspected |
| • Assessment of Accident Response Practices: | 28 Teams assessment |

The three QM teams further completed an assessment on testing the first aid knowledge & skills of 512 UXO Lao staff (Ops, SEOD, TL, Medics, Deminers and Drivers) in the provinces. Out of the 512 people 192 did not pass. The QM teams issued a recommendation to have further training for those staff members that did not pass the test and to further practice their first aid skills. The QM unit is currently following up on the implementation of this recommendation.

The QM teams further completed an assessment of 7 UXO Lao explosive storages in 9 provinces. The report has been shared with the UXO Lao Operations Unit and it was recommended that the Operations Unit follows up with the respective offices where the explosives storage were deemed unsatisfactory

IT update

- The IT unit installed a new Antivirus software for all PCs at the National Office and the Training Centre
- The IT unit further completed setting up Microsoft Outlook for all staff at the Training Center and provided training to individual staff at the Training Center and the National Office on how to safely back up information. UXO Lao has procured external hard drives for each unit in the National Office in order to ensure the safe back up of information for all staff at the National Office. The IT Technician further advised the IT coordinators at the provincial offices to complete the Antivirus set up as planned and is currently following up on this issue.
- In April 2013, the IT Technician participated at the IT workshop that was organized by the Lao Government in Vientiane. The aim of the training was to further expand the IT knowledge of government project staff. The training was organized around a range of topics such as firewall, IT security, network security, configuration of firewalls, etc.
- In May 2013, the UXO Lao IT technician participated in another IT workshop which was also organized by the Lao Government titled “ Managing IT in meeting rooms”

The agenda of the training included:

- ❖ using audio-visual equipments during meetings
- ❖ value setting of SQL server 2008 R2
- ❖ establishing, copy, solving, back up and loading of information on the SQL server 2008 R2
- ❖ practicing value setting of web server IIS
- ❖ practicing data entry/ taking minutes of a meeting
- ❖ quality management of meeting programs
- ❖ management and maintenance of IT equipment

Logistics/Procurement update

Besides equipment procures as outlined in the 2013 annual procurement plan, UXO Lao initiated the procurement of 271 handheld radios (complete with accessories) and 237 megaphones for UXO Lao in Q2. Following an operational review of assets over all nine provinces of operations, UXO Lao have identified a significant shortfall in the numbers of key operational equipment required to be able to allow UXO Lao to operate within its own Standing Operational Procedures – and respectively, the Lao National Standards. This procurement will allow full accordance with SOP to be achieved and is thus essential for UXO Lao operations.

Activity 3: Provide Training for Clearance Personnel according to National Standards

A high standard of training is essential for the development and maintenance of the capacity to carry out safe, effective and efficient operational activities in Lao PDR. To ensure a high standard of training, the NRA has set training standards for key sector appointments and to specify requirements for the management and conduct of training.

UXO Lao maintains a training centre at Ban Y Lai in Vientiane where different training courses are conducted by

UXO Lao instructors. Courses follow fixed curricula that are aligned with the NRA published National Standards. Internal validation of formal training courses is carried both during and upon completion of the course.

Internal validation includes:

- The regular assessment of instructors on their general instructor skills and methods of instruction. Assessments are done against an objective checklist and cover both theory and practical lessons.
- Trainee feedback sessions at the end of each formal training course to discuss the completed course and provide feedback on relevant topics. The feedback session are overseen by a staff member not involved with the management or conduct of the course.
- Visits to UXO/mine clearance operations by training staff

During Q2, one team leader course and one medic course were organized from end of May to mid July, where 36 UXO Lao staff are being trained, including 7 women. The course is expected to be completed on 19 July 2013. The objective of this course was to provide the participants with the necessary training and skills in order to be able to fulfil the duties of UXO Lao clearance and medical staff in the field.

Activity 4: Review and adopt improved technology where possible for effective and efficient operations (technological and methodological innovations and sector best practices)

In March 2013, trials were undertaken in Champasack province to continue the development of a more efficient technical survey capacity. One of the challenges of UXO clearance has always been to ensure that the clearance teams are used where the UXO are actually located. While a simple statement, this is challenging to achieve. Over the last 15 years, UXO Lao has significantly improved its ability to target clearance teams and now the vast majority of clearance tasks operate on contaminated areas.

Technical survey is the key to this and UXO Lao is assessing the possibility of introducing a “new” “evidence-based” approach to survey which aims to make targeting of clearance teams more effective resulting in even less land without UXO being cleared. The initial results of the trials were promising and will now be discussed further with the rest of the mine action community in Laos, as well as with the NRA to discuss the acceptability of this process. The full assessment of this new evidenced based approach is still under way and the project hopes to be able to report further results in Q3 of 2013. There is a national workshop planned to take place in October where all operators will come together to discuss methodology and the best ways forward.

4. Update on Partnerships

Bilateral partnerships update

- As part of the UXO Lao-JICA project on “*Supporting the Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Clearance in Surrounding Areas of Main Roads in the Lao PDR*” for the amount of ¥900,000,000 UXO Lao, together with the supplier agencies in Laos, completed the process of gathering the necessary documents for the tax exemption and import of the equipment and vehicles under this project to Lao PDR. The equipment and vehicles are expected to reach Vientiane by mid- September 2013. The official hand-over ceremony is planned to be held at the end of September/early October 2013.
- The 3rd Work Shop on Lao-Cambodia South-South Cooperation in the UXO/Mine Action Sector between UXO LAO and CMAC supported by JICA was held in Xiengkhuang province from 17-21 June 2013. The aim of the workshop was to share knowledge and experiences in regards to standards of operations in the mine action sector.
- UXO Lao together with Embassy of Japan, JICA, NRA, and National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NCRDPE) had discussion on the new pilot project that will be supported by the Japanese Government. The project is called “*The Project for Improvement of Equipment for UXO clearance Activities*”. This pilot project plans to introduce new brush cutting machines to UXO Lao and will take an integrated approach composed of three pillars: 1) trials of machines, 2) supporting UXO clearance and developing the capacity of UXO Lao, and 3) linking development and UXO clearance. The application is planned to be submitted to the Government of Japan mid September 2013.

UNDP partnerships update

The Government of Australia announced in June 2013 that it is increasing its support to the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao) with an additional A\$1,800,000 contribution (equivalent to approximately 13 billion Kip) under the Laos-Australian Rural Livelihood Program¹.

The new funding enables UXO Lao to increase its survey, clearance and risk education capacity in six districts, including Phine and Sepone (Savannakhet), Sukhuma and Moonlapamok (Champasak), and Lao Ngarm and Saravane (Saravane), where poverty reduction activities are hindered by the presence of UXO. These six districts are primary targets under the Laos Australia Rural Livelihoods Program, a A\$43 million program that provides poor rural families, in particular women, with greater and inclusive access to social protection, financial services, productive assets and opportunities to generate income.

Australia is a longstanding supporter of UXO action in Laos. Since 1996, Australia has provided more than \$24 million (equivalent to approximately 185 billion Kip)² through a comprehensive approach to UXO comprising clearance, risk awareness, victim assistance and sector planning, coordination and management, including by providing \$15 million through UNDP who has played a leading role in support of the UXO sector in Lao PDR.

¹ Estimated using UNDP July exchange rate

² Estimated using UNDP July exchange rate

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Dave Vosen, AusAID Head of Development Cooperation, said that *“during a series of consultations with provincial and district governors in April 2013, AusAID heard from local officials from Saravane, Champasak, and Savannakhet provinces who told us that poverty reduction activities are significantly hindered by the presence of UXO. Australia acknowledges that development initiatives undertaken in UXO contaminated areas indeed need to include survey, clearance and risk education activities so that development outcomes will not be diminished.”*

The signing ceremony between the Government of Australia through AusAID and the United Nations Development Programme to support the operations of UXO Lao was held in mid July 2013.

5. Audit, audit recommendations and follow-up

The project has updated the status of the 2011 audit recommendations as requested by UNDP. In March 2013, the UXO project also underwent the 2012 UNDP NIM audit. The Chief of the QM unit acted as a focal point at the project for coordination and questions and all requested documents were presented to the auditors on time. UXO Lao is currently working on addressing the recommendations and is updating the status of the audit recommendation follow up on a regular basis.

6. Priorities for Quarter 3 of 2013

Besides general clearance and community awareness operations that UXO Lao set out to do as described in the 2013 Annual Work Plan, UXO Lao plans to further conduct the following activities:

New National Programme Director UXO Lao

Mr. Thiphasone Soukhathammavong has been appointed the new National Programme Director of UXO Lao. In Q3, Mr. Thiphasone is planning to undertake several missions to the provinces to familiarize himself with the Programme and staff of UXO Lao.

Technical Survey Trials progress

In March 2013, Trials were undertaken in Champasack province to continue the development of a more efficient technical survey capacity. One of the challenges of UXO clearance has always been to ensure that the clearance teams are used where the UXO are actually located. While a simple statement, this is challenging to achieve. Over the last 15 years, UXO Lao has significantly improved its ability to target clearance teams and now the vast majority of clearance tasks operate on contaminated areas. Since these trials were undertaken, UXO Lao is going to continue to internally discuss the processes and is looking forward to being part of a workshop to be hosted by NRA in October 2013 to discuss the broader application of technical survey techniques and where lessons may be learned from other operators. Technical survey remains the key to effective work and UXO Lao still plans to introduce an "evidence-based" approach to survey which aims to make targeting of clearance teams more effective resulting in even less land without UXO being cleared.

Laos-Australia Rural Livelihood Program

Through the newly committed funds from AUSAID to support the Laos-Australia Rural Livelihood Program, UXO Lao will start procuring all necessary equipment in Quarter 3 to be able to start operations of the five new clearance teams and three new community awareness raising teams as planned. The first training course for EOD1 will be held 5 August – 9 September, and the new clearance staff graduating from this course in support of the Laos-Australia Rural Livelihood will be able to start work shortly thereafter.

Trainings and Testing

The following training courses are scheduled to be completed at the Training Center during Quarter 3:

- Team Leader course (27 May – 19 July 2013) 30 participants
- Medics course (17 June – 19 July 2013) 06 participants
- EOD1 course (05 August – 09 September 2013) 46 participants

Part of the equipment that is funded through the Government of Japan supported bilateral project on “Supporting the Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Clearance in Surrounding Areas of Main Roads in the Lao PDR” will arrive in Quarter 3 and the following training of the new equipment has been scheduled:

- *Vallon* detector training (29 July - 02 August 2013) – 26 participants
- *Minelab* detector training (05 – 09 August 2013) – 26 participants
- *Ebinger* detector training (26-30 August 2013) – 14 participants
- Radio training (02-06 September 2013) – 14 participants

CMAC-UXO Lao workshop preparations

In August 2013, UXO Lao together with the UXO based JICA expert will start preparations for UXO Lao’s participation in the 4th CMAC-UXO Lao workshop that will be organized from 25-29 November 2013 in Cambodia. The workshop is part of the ongoing series of workshops in relation to the South-South Cooperation on UXO/Mine Action Sector between UXO LAO and CMAC. The topic of the workshop will be “Mine Risk Education and Information Management”.

New Zealand General Governor visit

UXO Lao together with UNDP is planning to organize the visit of the Governor-General of New Zealand to the UXO site in Xiengkhuang province on Tuesday, 13 August 2013. A preparatory mission to accompany representatives of the New Zealand embassy in Bangkok as well as a New Zealand Government protection officer is planned for the end of July 2013.

UXO Lao capacity assessment

UNDP Lao and UNDP further plan to move ahead with UXO Lao’s capacity assessment and plan to have the Terms of Reference finalized within Quarter 3 of 2013.

PREPARED BY



Ms. Heuangphachanh Panpadith

Chief of Programme and Public Information Unit

Date **04 SEP 2013**

CLEARED/APPROVED BY




The stamp contains the following text in Lao: ກົມວຽກງານຊີວິດ ຕາມ ສາທາລະນະລາຍ, ອົງການຄະນະຊີວິດ, ອົງການຄະນະຊີວິດ, ອົງການຄະນະຊີວິດ.

Mr. Thiphasone SOUKHATHAMMAVONG

National Programme Director

Date **04 SEP 2013**